disbursements under IRDP scheme during the year 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 are given at Annexure [See Appendix 186, Annexure No. 1]. The bank-wise details of credit targets and disbursements under IRDP during the years 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 are given at Annexure [See Appendix 186, Annexure No. 1]

(c) and (d) The gap between the number of applications received, sanctioned and actual disbursements is, *inter-alia*, on account of bunching of applications towards end of the year, number of applications sponsored to banks being generally higher than the financial target, selection of activities not being in tune with the resource potential, available infrasturcure and credit absorption capacity at the local level, borrowers inability to complete procedural formalities in time, selection of beneficiaries without active involvement of the lending institutions, defaults in other Government sponsored schemes, etc.

The measures already initiated and steps contemplated by Government to remedy the situation, *inter-alia* include (i) gradual sponsorin of IRDP applications to avoid bunching towards the end of the year, (ii) fixing of a time frame for processing, sanction and disbursal of loans under IRDP; (iii) delegation of adequate financial power to Branch Managers for sanction of schemes under IRDP; (iv) introduction of Family Credit Plan (FCP) in 316 districts till 1997-98, under which more than a single member of a family may be given assistance subject to the normal subsidy limits; (v) enhancing ceiling limit for collateral free loans to Rs. 50,000/- with a view to easing the constraints faced by poor beneficiaries while availing loans from banks; (vi) extension of cash disbursement scheme to 50 per cent of the blocks of the country to give the benficiary freedom to select the assets of his choice; (vii) change in the administration of subsidy from front end to back-ended subsidy; (viii) focussing on the Group approach and funding through Self-Help Groups (SHGs); and (ix) involvement of the banks and other financial institutions in the planning and preparation of projects, identification of activity clusters, infrastructure planning as well as capacity building and the choice of activity of the SHGs.

Suggestions of Prof. Amartya sen on Resetting of Economic Priorities

*8. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Noble laureate Prof. Amartya Sen has suggested to reset economic priorities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action proposed by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) In a Newspaper item entitled "India must rest its economic priorities: Sen"published in 'The Hindu, dated the 11th December, 1998, it has been reported that Prof. Amartya Sen has suggested that India must reset its economic priorities to make them "people oriented rather than commodity related".

(c) Suggestions made by individuals and associations are kept in view while formulating appropriate policies by the Government. However, growth with social justice and alleviation of poverty has been and continues to be the basic objective of Indian economic policy and planning. The Ninth Plan document articulates the Government's overall Development Strategy.

Review of Pan System

*9. SHRI SITARAM KESRI:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated February 1, 1999, under the caption 'Doubts surface over efficacy of PAN system; if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(b) the details of the flaws which have surfaced in the Permanent Account Number (PAN) system which raised doubts as to its efficacy;

(c) whether there is any proposal to review the system so as to make it more workable,

economical and to avoid unnecessary harassment to the tax-payers; and

(d) if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The doubts raised regarding the efficacy of the PAN system are mis-conceived. There are adequate checks in the process of allotment of Permanent Account Numbers under the new series to ensure that the Number allotted is a unique one, and fully meets the requirements of the IT Department. There is no proposal to review the system.

Representation to weaker sections in the appointment of judges

*10. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI AKHILESH DAS :

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court has since tendered its opinion on the question of the procedure for appointment of High Court and Supreme Court Judges; if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether in this connection, Government have also considered the question of ensuring that due representation to weaker sections is given in the matter of appointment of Judges; and

(c) what final decision has since been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir.

The Advisory Opinion has laid down that the Chief Justice of India is obliged to consult a Collegium of his four seniormost Colleagues for appointment in the Supreme Court and a Collegium of two seniormost Judges for appointment of Chief Justice/Judges of the High Courts.

As regards transfer of Chief Justice or Judge of High Court, the Chief Justice of India is required to consult the four seniormost Judges of the Supreme Court. All consultation would be made in writing. Recommendation made by the Chief justice of India without adhering to the process of consultation is not binding upon the Government.

Appointment of Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts is made under Articles 124 and 217 of the Constitution which do not provide for reservation for any caste or class of persons. The Government have, however, from time to time addressed letters to the Chief Ministers of the States and the Chief Justices of the High Courts requesting them to locate suitable persons from the Bar belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other Backward Classes, Minorities and Women for appointment as High Court Judges.

Conversion of Vadodara-Nasik Road into National Highway

*11. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the action taken by Government for conversion of Gujarat State Highways-Vadodara-Porsinor-Netrang-Vyara-Ahwa-Saputara-Nasik road linking NH No. 8 with NH No. 6 into National Highways;

(b) whether the State Government of Gujarat has sent this proposal; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) to (c) Yes Sir, the State Govt. had submitted a proposal for conversion of Vadodara-Por-Sinor-Netrang-Vyara-Ahwa-Saputara-Nasik-road linking NH-8 with NH-6 as National Highway for consideration during 9th Plan period. The proposal could not be considered for declaration as new national highway due to inter-se priority of other proposals received from the Government of Gujarat and other State Governments and resource constraint.

राज्यों का गैर-विकास व्यय

*12. श्री राज मोहिन्दर सिंह:
श्री बलवन्त सिंह रामूवालिया:

क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि गत एक दशक से राज्यों के